

## Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L MADRID 7362

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PFOR, SP

SUBJ: MILITARY ATTITUDES TOWARD APPOINTMENT OF GENERAL  
GUTIERREZ MELLADO

1. THE CHIEF OF THE HIGH GENERAL STAFF, LT. GENERAL VALLESPIN, LUNCHEDED WITH ME ON SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 25, AND WE TALKED PRIVATELY ABOUT THE RECENT RESIGNATION OF GENERAL SANTIAGO AND HIS REPLACEMENT BY GENERAL GUTIERREZ MELLADO.

2. VALLESPIN SAID THAT SANTIAGO STILL FELT VERY PROFOUNDLY WITH REGARD TO THE CIVIL WAR AND THE FACT THAT THE COMMUNISTS HAD BEEN DEFEATED AT THAT TIME. ANYTHING WHICH RAISED THE SLIGHTEST POSSIBILITY IN HIS MIND THAT THE PROCESS COULD START ALL OVER AGAIN ALARMED HIM DEEPLY. THUS, HE WAS TROUBLED BY THE REFORM PROGRAM AND COULD NO LONGER ASSOCIATE HIMSELF WITH IT. VALLESPIN TOLD ME THAT AT THE MEETING BETWEEN THE LT. GENERALS AND PRIME MINISTER SUAREZ THERE HAD BEEN NO DEBATE AS SUAREZ HAD OUTLINED HIS REFORM PROGRAM SO THAT THE GENERALS WOULD KNOW EXACTLY WHAT WAS TO BE ANNOUNCED. SANTIAGO FELT VERY UNCOMFORTABLE IN ALL OF THIS, AND IT WAS THEREFORE NOT SURPRISING THAT HE HAD ASKED TO BE RELIEVED. VALLESPIN EMPHASIZED THAT ALTHOUGH THERE WAS NOT 100  
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PERCENT AGREEMENT ON THE GOVERNMENT'S REFORM PROGRAM,

THERZDWERE REALLY NO SERIOUS DIVISIONS WITHIN THEH KILITARY HIERARCHY, AND HE PERSONALLY BELIEVED THAT THE UNITY OF THE ARMY WAS INTACT.

3. VALLESPIN INDICATED THAT FROM HIS POINT OF VIEW, THERE HAD TO BE EVOLUTION IN SPAIN AND THE BUNKER WAS MAKING A MISTAKE IN BELIEVING THAT THINGS COULD GO ON AS BEFORE. AT THE SAME TIME, IT WAS ESSENTIAL THAT THE REFORM PROCESS GO FORWARD IN AN ORDERLY, MEASURED WAY IN ORDER TO AVOID UNNECESSARY RISKS. HE BELIEVED THAT THE MILITARY SHOULD INDEED PLAY NP POLITICAL ROLE AND SHOULD STICK TO ITS BASIC MISSION OF ASSURING THE UNITY AND INTEGRITY OF THE COUNTRY.

4. WITH REGARD TO GUTIERREZ MELLADO, VALLESPIN SAID THAT HE HAD ONLY BEGUN TO ATTRACT PUBLIC NOTICE WHEN HE (VALLESPIN) HAD ASSIGNED HIM AS THE HEAD OF THE SPANISH MILITARY DELEGATION IN THE US-SPANISH NEGOTIATIONS. BEFORE THAT TIME, HE WAS UNKNOWN AS A PUBLIC FIGURE. HE WAS UNDOUBTEDLY A HIGHLY INTELLIGENT AND CAPABLE OFFICER AND WOULD DO WELL IN HIS PRESENT JOB. HOWEVER, HE FOUND A LITTLE STRANGE THE VARIOUS LABELS OF "LIBERAL" WHICH HAD BEEN ATTACHED TO GUTIERREZ MELLADO. FIRST AND FOREMOST, HE IS A MILITARY OFFICER AND HOLDS THE SAME VIEWS AS THE OTHERS (WHICH IS TRUE) THAT IT IS NOT THE ROLE OF THE MILITARY TO GET MIXED UP IN THE POLITICAL PROCESS.

5. FINALLY, VALLESPIN COMMENTED THAT SPAIN LOOKED TO THE UNITED STATES FOR ASSISTANCE AND ENCOURAGEMENT IN ITS PRESENT COURSE. SPAIN WANTED TO BECOME MORE A PART OF EUROPE AND THERE COULD BE NO DOUBT THAT SPAIN WAS FULLY IDENTIFIED WITH THE WEST IN QUESTIONS RELATING TO DEFENSE. TWO MAJOR PROBLEMS WHICH SPAIN FACED TODAY IN ITS RELATION TO WESTERN DEFENSE WERE (1) GIBRALTAR AND (2) THE LACK OF ADEQUATE AND MODERN EQUIPMENT NECESSARY TO ENABLE SPAIN TO PLAY ITS FULL ROLE IN WESTERN DEFENSE. HE EXPRESSED THE HOPE THAT THE TREATY WITH THE UNITED

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STATES WOULD CONTRIBUTE TO OVERCOMING THE MATERIEL DEFICIENCIES.

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## Message Attributes

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